



### Objective

Our goal is to advance public policy to **eradicate hunger** in New Mexico by building an analysis of the connections between hunger, malnutrition, food production, and distribution.

### Workgroup Members

Alzheimer Association  
 Center for Health Innovation  
 Center for Law and Policy  
 Farm to Table  
 Feeding Santa Fe  
 Food Depot  
 Food and Agriculture Policy  
 Health Action New Mexico  
 Hunger Caucus  
 Interfaith Hunger Coalition  
 Meals on Wheels  
 National Center for Frontier Communities  
 New Mexico Farmers' Marketing Association  
 New Mexico First  
 New Mexico Nutrition and Dietetics  
 New Mexico Thrives  
 North Central New Mexico Economic Development  
 Roadrunner Food Bank  
 University of New Mexico, Honors College  
 Voices for Children

### Hunger Requires a Cross-sector Approach

- New Mexico has the highest child hunger rates in the nation. 1 in 4 children in New Mexico are struggling with hunger.(1)
- A significant majority of New Mexico's counties have food insecurity at rates greater than the national average.(2)
- Most families participating in SNAP have 1 or more household members that are employed.(3)
- While agriculture is a major economic driver in the state, over 90 percent of food New Mexicans consume comes from out of state, and nearly all food produced in New Mexico leaves the state. A stronger local food system would simultaneously help combat food insecurity and hunger while keeping more dollars in our local communities.

Rates of food insecurity and hunger in New Mexico reflect multiple systems failures. Therefore, our policy priorities are to:

- 1) Use data to inform decision-making
- 2) Promote local food systems and agricultural resilience
- 3) Increase the monthly food budget for families of low income



### Local Food Systems & Resilient Local Agriculture

- HB 144 \$100K in the Department of Health budget to expand the **Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program** providing seniors with vouchers to be able to purchase NM-grown fruits and vegetables at farmers' markets. 97,000 low-income seniors are eligible for this program, but current federal and state funds only provide enough funds for 16,000 seniors to participate.
- SB 76 \$100K in the Aging and Long-Term Service budget to **Purchase NM Grown Fruits and Vegetables for Senior Meals Programs**. Allows city, county and tribal run senior centers to purchase NM grown fruits and vegetables. New in 2019, this program aims to serve seniors across the state and create a new economic market for farmers.
- HB 2 \$450K recurring in the Public Education Department to expand the **NM Grown Produce for School Meals**. This incentive helps school districts learn how to purchase local produce and build it into this budget. In 2018-19 schools purchased \$1.15+ million.
- HB 2, HB 253, SB 177 \$150K in the Department of Agriculture to expand resources for developing **New Mexico local food and farming systems** including value chain coordination and food safety systems that **Support the SNAP Double Up Food Bucks** program and local producer sales to retail and institutional outlets.



### Family-friendly Anti-Hunger and Anti-Poverty Policies

- HB10 \$650K in the Public Education Department to **Eliminate Reduced-price Copays** for breakfast and lunch for approximately 12,463 students at 185% of the FPL.
- HB 340 \$500K in the Human Services Department budget for food banks to **Procure Non-Perishable Food Items** for all 33 counties.
- HB 69 \$100K in the Higher Education budget to pilot a **Fight College Hunger** initiative.
- HB 2 \$1.485M in the Human Service Department budget to create a state funded energy assistance program "**Heat and Eat**" for 68,000 families eligible for SNAP benefits. This will increase SNAP benefits by \$90 per month for each of those families.
- HB 2 \$3.7M for Human Service Department budget to **Upgrade Employment and Training** program for SNAP recipients who are Able-bodied Adults without Dependents. This will prevent New Mexicans from losing SNAP benefits.
- HB 2 \$5M over last year's operating budget in the Children Youth and Families Department budget to **Maintain Eligibility for Child Care Assistance**. This will sustain the increase from Sept. to provide subsidized care to an additional 1,000 children and add funding for additional children.
- \$200 K for **Tax Help New Mexico** to restore funding for tax preparation help for people of low income. This would return 13-22% of the tax rebates for EITC and WFTC to New Mexico families in poverty and the economy.



### Data-Informed Decision-Making

- HB 75 \$200K in the Human Services Department budget to develop a **Hunger Task Force** to study hunger, malnutrition, food production and distribution.
- HM 6 establish a **Taskforce to Address Barriers to Food Access** by working cross-sector to identify the state's assets, gaps and barriers related to the goal of ensuring that all New Mexico residents are able to have a nutritious and sufficient diet.

**For questions, please call Lilly Irvin-Vitela, President and Executive Director of New Mexico First at 505-234-0694 or email [lilly@nmfirst.org](mailto:lilly@nmfirst.org)**

1 Rick Nathanson. Journal Staff Writer. May 2019 "New Mexico Again Leads the Nation in Child Hunger" <https://www.abqjournal.com/1310364/new-mexico-again-leads-nation-in-child-hunger.html>, retrieved November 2019

2 Feeding America, Map the Meal Gap 2017, <https://map.feedingamerica.org/county/2017/overall/new-mexico>, retrieved November 2019.

3 USDA Profile of SNAP Households, <https://fns-prod.azureedge.net/sites/default/files/resource-files/NewMexico.pdf> retrieved November 2019.